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P 301012Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1355  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 2229  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 8959  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 2228  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3030  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 2245  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0128  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 2982  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 9863  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0338  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 6941  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 4351  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 9254  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 3436  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5371  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 6963  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

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JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
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COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019  
JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
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PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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Mideast

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Key stories in the media:  
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Leading media reported that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is slated to meet Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas probably next

Thursday.

Ha'aretz reported that the security cabinet will meet Wednesday in order to discuss the conflict in the Gaza Strip. The cabinet will examine acceptable terms for a cease-fire and to approve gradual escalation of IDF's activity should the cease-fire efforts fail.

Ha'aretz internet site cited Hamas Damascus-based political leader Khaled Meshal as saying in an interview to the British "The Guardian" that Hamas intends to continue its attacks on Israel despite the IDF operations in the Gaza Strip.

All media dealt with the results of the Labor Party primary elections. Leading media noted that current Labor Party leader Amir Peretz can become the one to help one of the sides (Ami Ayalon and Ehud Barak) win the second round. Thus, most op-ed editorials call upon the two to avoid deals and intrigues.

All media noted one of the big surprises of the Labor Party primary. Thirty three percent of the Arab sector voted for former prime minister Ehud Barak (34 percent voted for Peretz) despite him being prime minister during the October 2000 riots in which 13 Israel Arabs were killed in clashes with the police.

Leading media reported that the Israel Air Force killed two Hamas men early Wednesday in a strike on a group of gunners firing rockets at Israel from the northern Gaza Strip.

All media reported that PM Olmert has spoken to the Knesset on Wednesday regarding the Winograd Committee interim report. In his speech he said that the Lebanon War was justified and its outcome dramatically improved Israel's strategic position.

Maariv reported that the Israeli Ambassador to Guatemala has survived an attempted assassination last week when two people opened fire at an event he participated in.

Ha'aretz reported that Meretz MKs Avshalom Vilan and Zahava Gal-On have been promoting a diplomatic initiative to restore stability in Gaza. This initiative would give the Arab League responsibility for the coastal strip and install a multi-national force, in cooperation with the European Union. According to the newspaper the two MK's have already presented the initiative to senior Palestinian figures and foreign diplomats.

All media reported that the High Court of Justice has decided and ordered on Tuesday that the state would provide all schools in Sderot and towns around the Gaza Strip with protective reinforcement by September 2007.

Leading media reported that the Bank of Israel held a discussion on Tuesday whether to stop its publication of daily ??representative exchange rates. According to Yediot the inclination is leaning towards stopping publication of these rates in a year.

Israel Radio reported that Vice Prime Minister Shimon Peres has announced that he is running for presidency with the support of PM Olmert and the Kadima Party. The elections for presidency will be held on June 13, 2007.

Ha'aretz reported that the UN Security Council is expected too approve Wednesday the establishment of an international tribunal to try those responsible for the murders of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Harriri and other political figures.

Yediot reported that the Singaporean army has set up the first Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) force in the world. The newspaper reported that this UAV force is totally based on Israeli manufactured planes.

#### POLLS:

Yediot presented the results of a Mina Zemach (Dahaf Institute) poll conducted among registered Labor Party voters and 100 Amir Peretz voters:

"Whom would you like to win in the second round of the Labor Party primary?" The answers: Ehud Barak: 44% (all voters), 22% (Peretz voters); Ami Ayalon: 46% (all voters), 48% (Peretz voters).

Maariv printed the results of a TNS/Teleseker Polling Institute survey among Labor Party voters: "Who would you vote for in the second round? " Ehud Barak: 42.2%; 39.5% with Peretz's support. Ami Ayalon: 44.3%; 40.3% with Peretz's support. Don't know/undecided: 10.7%. Not planning to vote: 2.8%.

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Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Senior diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shiffer wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The combative sounds being made by the Labor Party candidates should not cause undue excitement.... Whether Barak is elected or Ayalon -- either of them will join Olmert's government.... This is the reason that no tension or vigilance were felt yesterday among Ehud Olmert's close aides."

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "But anyone who seeks to lead the Labor Party, and presumably also the country, must imbue his candidacy with a bit more content.... Two weeks are enough time to present positions. Even if their media advisers want to blur and obscure the content, the candidates must not bow to this dictate."

Block Quotes:  
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11. "Nothing to Worry About"

Senior diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shiffer wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (05/30): "The combative sounds being made by the Labor Party candidates should not cause undue excitement.... Whether Barak is elected or Ayalon -- either of them will join Olmert's government.... This is the reason that no tension or vigilance were felt yesterday among Ehud Olmert's close aides. As of now, Olmert and his people are not packing their bags, they are preparing for a move that is supposed to stabilize the government in the coming weeks. If Ehud Barak wins in the second round of the elections, Olmert will offer him the seat of the defense minister in the Kirya. Olmert intends to compensate Amir Peretz, who will vacate the Defense Ministry, with a social portfolio that will be tailored to fit him.... In the end, the tube of glue bonding together all the coalition partners has one name written on it in bold letters: Binyamin Netanyahu. Neither Barak nor Lieberman has any interest in making a move that will pave Netanyahu's way back to the Prime Minister's Bureau."

12. "More Content, Fewer Deals"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (05/30): "After his strategy of total silence led Ehud Barak to victory in the first round of the Labor leadership primary, it is hard to imagine that it will be possible to get him to talk before the second round. But anyone who seeks to lead the Labor Party, and presumably also the country, must imbue his candidacy with a bit more content. Ever since Barak quit politics for business, he has turned silence into an ideology.... It is an open secret that the Olmert government, despite its political stability, is incapable of advancing any initiative because it has lost the public's confidence. If the new Labor leader dissolves into this nothingness, and his entire role shrinks to becoming defense minister and examining the chief of staff's military plans, the change at the top will be meaningless.... Barak left politics with the sentence 'there is no one to talk to' after his talks with Yasser Arafat failed. Ayalon, in contrast, has never stopped talking with the Palestinians over the years, and he also headed the People's Voice initiative with Sari Nusseibeh. In this field as well, we deserve to hear from both of them whether anything has changed in their positions and what they propose for rescuing the region from the cycle of violence. Two weeks are enough time to present positions. Even if their media advisers want to blur and obscure the content, the candidates must not bow to this dictate."

JONES